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feebled by starvation, their clothing and tent in rags, they crawled, through incredible hardships, 160 miles in twenty-six days. Brönlund alone reached the depot, with Hagen's chart and his own field-journal, in which the final entry runs: "I perished in 79° N. latitude, under the hardships of the return journey over the inland ice in November. I reached this place under a waning moon, and cannot go on because of my frozen feet and the darkness. The bodies of the others are in the middle of the fiord. Hagen died on November 15, Mylius-Erichsen some ten days later."

L. J. B.

*Colbert's West India Policy.* By STEWART MIMS, Assistant Professor of History, Yale University. [Yale Historical Series, I.] (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Henry Frowde. 1912. Pp. xiv, 385.)

IN 1736 John Bennett, whose residence in the West Indies as agent of the South Sea and Royal Assiento Company gave weight to his judgments, addressed to an unnamed statesman, *Four Letters concerning the flourishing Condition, large Extent, and prodigious Increase of the French Sugar Colonies; the Poverty, Weakness and Decay of the British Sugar Colonies; and their vast Importance to the Trade, Navigation, Wealth and Power of this Nation.* He voiced the conviction of his day. Jamaica planters acclaimed it; Massachusetts merchants acted upon it. Nevertheless the French West Indies have remained, as Professor Mims says, little more than a name. "Students have watched New England ships sail with their cargoes of fish, lumber, live stock and food-stuffs and have let them, so to speak, disappear into the unknown, whence they saw them reappear with cargoes of sugar and molasses." To follow those ships to Martinique, or to Guadeloupe, or to St. Domingo, to learn the secret of that extraordinary development which enabled the French planters to drive English sugar from the warehouses of Europe and to afford New England traders their most profitable market, such was the fascinating task which Mr. Mims undertook, hoping thereby to elucidate "the so-called economic causes of the American Revolution". His immediate interest lay, therefore, in the eighteenth century. But to understand that period he found an introductory study necessary. It carried him back to Colbert. He discovered that no serious student had dealt in detail with any single problem that Colbert encountered in his attempts to build up French colonial commerce in the West Indies. So he yielded to the temptation of expanding his introduction into an independent book.

This, then, is the initial volume of a history of French colonial policy in the West Indies. Another, announced for early publication (pp. ix, 318), will bring the narrative through the reign of Louis XIV. Subsequent studies will extend it, let us hope, for at least a century further. Meanwhile the first volume is before us. It is soberly written, foregoing

tales of exploration or of personal adventure, concerning itself with war or diplomacy in so far only as the author finds needful for explaining the course of administration, touching even upon politics only when politics is shaped by the necessities of commerce.

The book is divisible into two parts, nearly equal in size. The first, after outlining the history of the French colonies prior to the establishment of the West India Company in 1664, traces with much care the varying fortunes of that company during its ten years of life. The second part takes up topically the more important subjects that have appeared in the preceding narrative, such as the struggle to exclude the Dutch from the commerce of the islands, the licensing by the company of French private traders, the means taken to encourage the production of tobacco and of sugar, and the efforts that Colbert made to supply the French planters not merely with African slaves of French procuring, but also with French live-stock, lumber, provisions, and manufactured goods. This part also contains, incidentally, a somewhat scattered account of Colbert's later policy, from the downfall of the company in 1674 to his own death in 1683. It is obviously a plan that must entail repetitions. But they have seldom been permitted to transcend the minimum which a clear presentation of the facts demanded.

For most of this study contemporary books are few. To Du Tertre's *Histoire Générale des Antilles habitées par les François* (1667-1671) Professor Mims, in common with all students of the early history of the French West Indies, owes a heavy debt. This he handsomely acknowledges (p. 342); and it stands not less clearly revealed by the fragmentariness of his insular narrative after 1667, when the Dominican fails him. Second in importance is perhaps the *Relation de ce qui s'est passé dans les Isles et Terre Ferme de l'Amérique, recüilly par J[ean de] C[lodoré] S[ecrétaire] D[e] V[aisseaux]*, as most bibliographers believe. Professor Mims, however, without discussing the authorship, attributes it to de La Barre (pp. 140, 360). However that may be, the book closes with 1669. There is no other seventeenth-century publication of importance. The chief modern writers on Colbert, regarding the West India Company as one of his failures, all pass over it briefly except Benoît du Rey. And of his *Recherches sur la Politique Coloniale de Colbert* Professor Mims has but a low opinion. Depping's *Correspondance Administrative*, Boislisle's *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, and Moreau de Saint-Méry's *Loix et Constitutions des Colonies Françaises*, however, print source-material of which Professor Mims makes extended use. But his book is based, chiefly and first of all, upon hitherto unused manuscripts. The archives of the ports which traded most largely with the West Indies proved disappointingly barren, but in Paris he found masses of archival material of which he gives a full account (pp. 342-358).

The points of greatest interest in the history of the West India Company brought to light by Professor Mims's diligence and acuteness are perhaps these: that the subscription of a half-million livres to its capital on the day the books were opened is no proof of a public success, the

operation being but an exchange for the stock of the older and only half-successful company of Cayenne (pp. 75-78); that though there were a few merchants among the company's directors their subscriptions were small and their influence slight; that of a total capital of more than five millions subscribed first or last the king furnished more than half, and revenue farmers and high officials almost all the residue, so that the company was in fact little more than a colonial office, and its policy was completely dominated not by its merchant directors, but by Colbert; that the embarrassments which insufficient capital had brought upon it were so increased by the war with England that its balance-sheet, struck soon after the peace of Breda, showed a deficit of 1,600,000 livres (p. 147); that in order to sustain the planters during the war the company was forced to share its monopoly with French private traders, and even to readmit the Dutch; that Colbert soon came to appreciate the superior efficiency of the private traders, and although he again expelled the Dutch with barbarity, even suggesting (p. 198) that the Caribs be secretly incited to attack them, he threw open the trade of the islands to all Frenchmen in 1670, and in 1671 confined the trade of the company to the importation of slaves from Africa and of live-stock and salt meat from France (pp. 163-164); that the company succeeded so ill in the beef-trade that Colbert decided, in October, 1672, to dissolve it, leaving the colonial trade freely open to all Frenchmen.

Such are the bald outlines of the story. Professor Mims enriches it with a wealth of new details, many revealing afresh the familiar aspects of all West Indian commerce: the ubiquity of the Dutch, to whose services in supporting early European establishments overseas he pays a deserved tribute; the willingness of insular governors, who must live on tolerable terms with their planter neighbors, to deceive their superiors at home as to the effectiveness of measures enjoined for suppressing interlopers; the inevitable "ketch coming from the city of Boston", and the early reputé of the New Englanders for a spirit of political independence; the long inadequacy of Canada to provision the West Indies; and the prevalent disposition of every island to believe its neighbors more prosperous than itself. Comment and interpretation seem, in general, to be judicious and such as the sources sufficiently support. Towards doctrinaire interpretations of Colbert's policy, whether by convinced free traders or by resolute admirers of bureaucracy, Professor Mims shows a healthy repugnance, preferring to find rather the spirit of the commercial opportunist—"habile homme d'affaires"—in the varying means by which the great minister pursued his unchanging aim of engrossing French colonial commerce for Frenchmen.

In general, so far as I have been able to check the matter, Professor Mims uses his sources with care. But his translations, fluent and idiomatic, are occasionally rather free. Thus, in a passage quoted from Du Tertre (p. 107) clauses are altered, though in a manner that the original context fairly warrants and that serves to clarify the historian's mean-

ing. No substantial harm is done by the translator's changes, but it is disconcerting to find the result enclosed in marks of quotation.

Mechanically, the book, with its ample page, strong but open type, and rough paper, is most agreeable to use; and in this regard, as well as in its scholarly conscientiousness, it is an auspicious inauguration of the *Yale Historical Studies*.

CHARLES H. HULL.

## MINOR NOTICES

*Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1910.* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1912, pp. 725.) Following the report of the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the Association, held at Indianapolis, December, 1910, and the account of the seventh meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch, the volume contains a number of the papers which were read at the meeting, dealing, as it happens, entirely with English and American history. Those concerned with the former are: the Efforts of the Danish Kings to secure the English Crown, by Professor Laurence M. Larson; the Records of the Privy Seal, by Professor James F. Baldwin; Royal Purveyance in Fourteenth-Century England in the Light of Simon Islip's *Speculum Regis*, by Professor Chalfant Robinson; Anglo-Dutch Relations, 1654-1660, by Professor R. C. H. Catterall; and Some Critical Notes on the Works of S. R. Gardiner, by Professor R. G. Usher. American history is treated in the following papers: the Mexican Policy of Southern Leaders under Buchanan's Administration, by Professor James M. Callahan; the Decision of the Ohio Valley [in 1860], by Professor Carl Russell Fish; North Carolina on the Eve of Secession, by Professor William K. Boyd; the Inception of the Montgomery Convention, by Dr. Armand J. Gerson; the Attitude of Congress toward the Pacific Railway, 1856-1862, by Professor Allen M. Kline.

Passing from individual to corporate activities, we have a paper on the Working of the Western State Historical Society, by Miss Jeanne E. Wier, the Report of the Committee of Five on the Study of History in Secondary Schools, which is of especial value to teachers of history, an account of the seventh annual conference of historical societies with a summary of the reports from these societies, and the report of the Public Archives Commission, containing an account of the second annual conference of archivists, and a report of the International Congress of Archivists at Brussels in 1910. The commission also presents reports on the archives of Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, and the Philippines, by Professor Harlow Lindley, Miss Irene T. Myers, Mr. Addison E. Sheldon, and Dr. James A. Robertson. Last of all comes the annual bibliography, *Writings on American History, 1910* (pp. 429-706), compiled by Miss Grace Griffin, and now annually incorporated in the *Annual Report*.